

I am writing to urge to you to stop phone companies from imposing extra and misleading charges on my monthly phone bill so I can truly compare prices of phone services. I support the petition filed by the National Association of State Utility Consumer Advocates and endorsed by other consumer advocacy organizations, including Consumers Union. This petition, CG Docket No. 04-208, Petition for Declaratory Ruling Regarding Truth-In-Billing and Billing Format, is long overdue. Many consumers feel as I do -- annoyed with a long list of extra charges and frustrated with trying to compare prices when shopping for telecommunications service. Phone bills should be truthful, easy to read and easy to understand. They should bill for services used, without a laundry list of additional charges. Instead, the long distance and wireless bills are filled with surcharges with misleading names that imply the line items are mandated by law, when they are not. Because this practice! is tolerated by the FCC, long distance and wireless phone companies are able to hide the true cost of service. These add-ons make the advertised price of service significantly less than the amount of the check I have to write each month to pay the bill. Competition will not work if consumers cannot accurately compare prices. The FCC should immediately grant the NASUCA petition to investigate carrier practices related to line item charges on bills for wireline and wireless phone service; to declare certain practices in violation on the Commission's "Truth in Billing" Order and to prohibit carriers from imposing separate monthly fees, line items or surcharges unless expressly mandated by law or the charge is expressly authorized by a governmental authority.